

## How To Laugh Like A Jedi

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**\*\*How To Laugh Like A Jedi\*\***  
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Obi-Wan and Anakin knelt on the floor of a large, sparsely decorated room in the Naboo palace. For the last several hours they had been trying to connect their minds in the vital Master/Padawan bond. But nothing was working. Obi-Wan could easily sense his Padawan's feelings of frustration, compounded by his own. They weren't getting anywhere and it didn't seem likely that they would.

Caught up in thought, he didn't even hear the thunder begin. But Anakin did. Shifting uneasily, he opened his eyes. Thunder was one thing Anakin could not stand, it was too rare on Tatooine to worry, but here on Naboo it was all too common. Obi-wan, feeling nervousness in the boy, looked up to find Anakin biting his lip, trying desperately to master his fear.

"Anakin," he said gently. "What's wrong?"

"The thunder," Anakin answered, almost too softly to hear."

"You're afraid of thunder?" Obi-Wan questioned, scarcely believing his ears. Anakin dropped his eyes, looking shamefaced.

"You're not afraid of pod-racing, you're not afraid of piloting a starship through a battle, but you can't stand thunder?" Obi-Wan asked again, helplessly. Another nod, and a shiver as an especially loud crash reached their ears.

"Anakin," Obi-Wan repeated, about to start the familiar

fear-is-not-a-Jedi-trait lecture he'd heard a thousand times. Then he stopped. A lecture wouldn't get the lesson across. Moving over to the boy, he put a hand on his shoulder.

"Anakin, do you know what thunder is?" he said, endeavoring to place a light tone in his voice.

"Not really, no," Anakin answered, looking up.

Obi-Wan smiled in an attempt to comfort. "It's laughter."

Anakin glanced at him as though he'd just sprouted a second head. "What?"

"Laughter, Anakin. In an old story that Master Qui-Gon told me, the ancient hero of Alderaan, Seyod, once got to sit in on a Council of the Gods. And he noticed that whenever the greatest of the gods laughed, rain came to refresh the plains. So thunder became laughter." Anakin nodded, interested.

Obi-Wan took a breath. "What I want you to do is, whenever you hear thunder, laugh. That will remind you that there's nothing to be afraid of."

"I could try that-" he broke off as a much louder crack of thunder resounded through the room.

Laugh, Anakin!" Obi-Wan commanded, moving a hand to the back of the boy's neck, tickling him.

Then Anakin did laugh, giggling, squirming, trying to get away. But Obi-Wan was a practiced tickler and they were both soon laughing so hard, they didn't even hear the door opening and Mace Windu entering the room, stopping dead at the sight of the two giggling like six-year-olds.

"Highly unorthodox training methods, Obi-Wan," Mace said, and Obi-wan jumped up, the smile disappearing from his face as he saw who it was. Obi-Wan walked over, bowing low before the Jedi master, Anakin following at a safe distance.

"I was curing an irrational fear, Master Windu. Anakin is...afraid of thunder," he said, low, so Anakin could not hear the words.

"He's what?" Mace said, shocked. "Anakin..." he began in a reproving voice, as another thunderclap split the air. Obi-Wan looked down, smiling, and raised his eyebrows at Anakin.

Anakin began to laugh, mirthlessly and forced at first, but as Obi-Wan stared at him, he laughed harder and harder. And suddenly, as quickly as a lightning bolt, Obi-Wan and Anakin could communicate without words, the first sign of their Master/Padawan bond.

Mace Windu stood dumbfounded as Obi-Wan dropped to his knees, putting his arms around his Padawan, both shaking with laughter, as the thunder rolled, lightning flashed, and the rain poured down in torrents.

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